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T-287 P14/16 U-234

Appl. No. 10/006,432
Amdt. Dated February 17, 2004
Reply to Office Action of November 19, 2003

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4-23 remain in the application. Claims 1, 4, 23 have been amended. *Claim 3 has been canceled to facilitate prosecution of the instant application.*

In item 2 on page 2 of the above-identified Office Action, claims 1 and 23 have been rejected as being fully anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,934,115 to Bernier (hereinafter '*115*') under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

In item 4 on page 3 of the above-identified Office Action, claim 2 have been rejected as being obvious over '*115*' under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

These rejections have been noted and the claims have been amended according to the Examiner's recommendation in an effort to even more clearly define the invention of the instant application. Specifically, the limitations of claim 3 have been incorporated into base claim 1. Support for these changes may be found in claim 3 of the instant application.

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Applicant appreciatively acknowledges the Examiner's statement in item 5 on page 4 that claims 3-22 "would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims." Accordingly, applicant has rewritten claims 1 and 23 to incorporate the limitations of claim 3. As such, claims 1 and 23 are believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Moreover, claim 5 was previously rewritten in allowable independent form, in accordance with the Examiner's previous instructions in item 5 on page 5 of Paper No. 9, and is also in condition for immediate allowance.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claims 1, 5, or 23. Claims 1, 5, and 23 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art. The dependent claims are believed to be patentable as well because they all are ultimately dependent on claim 1 and claim 5.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 2, and 4-23 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate receiving a

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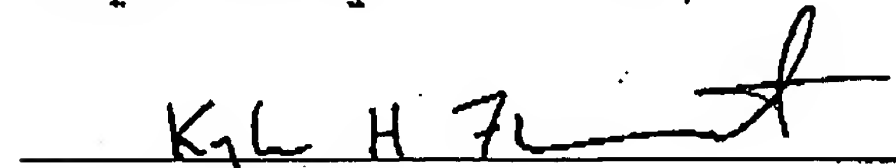
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telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can
be worked out.

Please charge any other fees that might be due with respect
to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner
and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,


For Applicant

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KHF:cgm

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